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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 USNATO 000131

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SIPDIS

OVIP: STACEY HAWKINS, BRIAN MCKEON, WARD DIRKSEN,
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TAGS: OVIP MOPS NATO PGOV PREL KV AF PK
SUBJECT: THE VICE PRESIDENT'S MARCH 10 MEETING WITH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL.

USNATO 00000131 001.2 OF 005

Classified By: Ambassador Kurt Volker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) March 10, 2009; 9:30AM-12:15PM Central European
Time; Brussels, Belgium.

¶2. (U) Participants:

U.S.:
The Vice President
Ambassador Kurt Volker
National Security Advisor to the Vice President Anthony
Blinken
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy
Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, NSC
VADM James Winnefeld, JCS J-5

NATO:
Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero
Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee LTG Karl Eikenberry

NATO COUNTRIES:
Albania (Invitee): Ambassador Artur Kuko
Belgium: Permanent Representative Franciskus van Daele
Bulgaria: Permanent Representative Lubomir Ivanov
Canada: Permanent Representative Robert McRae
Croatia (Invitee): Ambassador Igor Pokaz
Czech Republic: Permanent Representative Stefan Fule
Denmark: Permanent Representative Per Poulsen-Hansen
Estonia: Permanent Representative Juri Luik
France: Permanent Representative Pascale Andreani
Germany: Permanent Representative Ulrich Brandenburg
Greece: Permanent Representative Thrasyvoulos Terry
Stamatopoulos
Hungary: Permanent Representative Zoltan Martinusz
Iceland: Permanent Representative Thorsteinn Ingolfsson

Italy: Permanent Representative Stefano Steffanini
Latvia: Permanent Representative Janis Eichmanis
Lithuania: Permanent Representative Linas Linkevicius
Luxembourg: Permanent Representative Alphonse Berns
Netherlands: Permanent Representative Herman Schaper
Norway: Permanent Representative Kim Traavik
Poland: Permanent Representative Boguslaw Winid
Portugal: Permanent Representative Manuel Fernandes Pereira
Romania: Permanent Representative Sorin Ducaru
Slovakia: Permanent Representative Frantisek Kasicky
Slovenia: Permanent Representative Bozo Cerar
Spain: Permanent Representative Carlos Miranda
Turkey: Permanent Representative Tacan Ildem
United Kingdom: Permanent Representative Stewart Eldon

SHAPE
Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Bantz John Craddock

¶3. (C/REL NATO) Summary: The Vice President set a high tone of "straightforward listening and consulting" during his brief to NATO Permanent Representatives in the North Atlantic Council on March 10. Following discussion, he highlighted areas of consensus and listed potential civilian and military contributions nations should consider completely fulfilling before the April NATO Summit. He noted five areas of concern that would require continued debate and dialogue in the international community. Many nations called his visit a "visible demonstration" that the U.S. values the Alliance and actively considers feedback. Permanent Representatives appreciated the Vice President's candor and transparency in previewing the U.S. Afghanistan-Pakistan strategic review.
End summary.

USNATO 00000131 002.2 OF 005

PREVIEW OF U.S. REVIEW

¶4. (C/REL NATO) The Vice President carefully outlined his visit as an opportunity to listen, consult, and forge a common and comprehensive approach to Afghanistan. He said he was keeping President Obama's commitment to collect Allied and partner inputs on what is working, what is not working, and how to disrupt the safe haven of terrorism in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. He underlined that once a common strategy is achieved, the U.S. expects nations to keep the commitments they suggested during the review process.

¶5. (C/REL NATO) Biden focused on the responsibility of all nations at the table to protect the security of their citizens and described "those mountains" as al-Qaida's preferred location for regenerating and developing new atrocities to wage. The U.S. is deeply committed to NATO, the Vice President continued, and the Alliance works best when we listen to each other and commit the full measure of our strength to achieve our goals. He said absent that kind of cohesion, it will be incredibly difficult for NATO to face future challenges. "We have to get this right even though our publics are tired of war," he concluded.

¶6. (C/REL NATO) The U.S. Afghanistan-Pakistan review, the Vice President announced, has the following elements:
-- To set clear achievable goals with a minimum core objective to disrupt, destroy, and deny terrorist safe haven in the Pakistan-Afghan tribal and border areas;
-- That the region should be treated as one theater, and the U.S should move from a transactional relationship with Pakistan to a longer-term partnership based on stabilizing the economy, bolstering democratic institutions, and eliminating safe havens on Pakistani territory;
-- That there is no purely military solution, but Afghanistan requires an integrated civilian-military approach focused on building security while minimizing civilian casualties; and

-- That the U.S. should revive diplomacy in the region with every stakeholder.

AREAS OF CONSENSUS

¶ 17. (C/REL NATO) Following two hours of consultation with Allies, the Vice President summarized eight areas of general consensus that he will report to the U.S. Strategic Review process:

- That the world, not just NATO, should "own" the Afghanistan problem;
- That the international community needs a serious and coherent plan to deal with narcotics;
- That NATO should play a stronger role in Afghan police development
- That the credibility of upcoming Afghan presidential elections is critical, but nations harbor no illusions that elections will produce a western-style participatory democracy in the short term;
- That Afghans need to take more ownership of governance matters;
- That accountability, benchmarks, and measurable criteria must be hallmarks of the international community's approach;
- That a regional approach including all Afghanistan's neighbors is appropriate and necessary for success;

USNATO 00000131 003.2 OF 005

-- That there should be better overall coordination of efforts.

THEREFORE, ACHIEVE DELIVERABLES

¶ 18. (C/REL NATO) Given these broad principles of consensus, the Vice President added, we should be able to achieve a number of concrete deliverables by the April NATO Summit. He continued, "I am not asking for volunteers at the table today, but you should think about it," and not hesitate while waiting for a bilateral "ask." Biden said NATO should fully fill the elections support force, especially the two remaining battalions in the south and enablers such as airlift, medical, and counter-IED resources. He said of the total 233 million USD required to successfully hold Afghan presidential elections, only 114 million is pledged, and the UN needs 50-60 million more in pledges before the end of March. He called out the EU as "still undecided" on whether to send an observer mission, and said NATO nations should encourage their colleagues in the EU to commit civilian election monitors and assure them that forces in the field would provide adequate security (he did not specify whether ISAF or U.S. forces would secure election monitors).

¶ 19. (C/REL NATO) The Vice President lauded the recent expansion of the scope of the Afghan National Army Trust Fund, but said real contributions must follow. He asked nations to field the most urgently required Operational Maneuver and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) bringing the total from 52 to 63 by April (he noted a total eventual number of 103 OMLTs, commensurate with the Afghan army build-up). Biden urged donations to the Law and Order Trust Fund that pays police salaries and called for a more robust NATO role in police training, asking whether it made sense for Allies to commit trainers and mentors through creation of a NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. The Vice President highlighted the need for "the pretty basic stuff" of governance - international mentors to assist office organization, develop payroll and administrative functions, and instill management principles - organized through civilian teams at central, provincial, and local levels. He said the Regional Command-South civil-military coordination cell should be replicated around the country. Biden asked

nations to focus recruitment on agricultural experts to teach better methods and help Afghanistan build a job-creating farming industry. Looking more widely across the region, he said nations should plan bilateral contributions and further support to the International Monetary Fund during the upcoming donor conference in Tokyo on March 17, to assist Pakistan to weather its economic crisis.

TOPICS FOR CONTINUED DELIBERATION

¶10. (C/REL NATO) Turning to topics that Permanent Representatives did not address, "whether due to lack of time or continued differences of opinion," the Vice President identified five critical future discussions. He noted that the U.S. Strategy Review had not reached conclusions on these issues:

-- Nations need to come to some agreement on how to encourage and support an Afghan-led reconciliation program that discerns among al Qaida, Pakistani Taliban, Afghan Taliban, the Taliban Quetta Shura, and local fighters;

USNATO 00000131 004.2 OF 005

-- Nations need to discuss the footprint of international forces. Vice President Biden noted that, "We are on the ragged edge of being seen as occupiers," and should review the nature of troops appropriate to achieving our goals.

-- Nations should debate how to address the rampant corruption pervading Afghan government institutions, and whether efforts will be best channeled in a centralized or loosely federated manner;

-- An appropriate judicial system devised for Afghanistan will need to consider some level of tribal and cultural context - the Taliban's claim that they can deliver "justice" has resonated with the population because, while brutal, it accounts for tribal and cultural norms.

-- The international community's single most consequential accomplishment to affect Pakistani behavior toward its own insurgents and northwest border areas could be to forge rapprochement between India and Pakistan.

NATO SHOULD EXPAND ROLE WITH POLICE

¶11. (C/REL NATO) The Vice President suggested twice in his remarks that NATO should do more on police development, either through a NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (similar to the one in Iraq) or another mechanism. He underlined the need for paramilitary-type robust police trainers to deploy to districts, because "the Afghan police are in combat, like it or not." Italy, the Czech Republic, Canada, Croatia, Spain, and Portugal supported this idea (only Germany thought numbers of police and trainers were sufficient). Spain and Portugal said UN-mandate language would help them consider committing to a bigger NATO police effort. Paired with an increased NATO role, Biden welcomed the EU's commitment to increase the size of the EUPOL mission. The Vice President, supported by UK Permanent Representative Eldon, said NATO should explore setting up an Afghan Defense University. The UK Ambassador posed the possibility of transforming the existing Combined Training Advisory Group within Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan into a sub-command of a NATO training mission, and giving it the mandate for managing branch schools, academies, defense colleges, and doctrinal development.

DISTRICT APPROACHES

¶12. (C/REL NATO) In response to the Vice President's stated preference for district-level approaches, Polish Ambassador Winid said, "We should think countrywide but act

district-wide." The Czech Ambassador called it, "Get focused, go local," but said district-centered initiatives need better overall clearinghouse coordination. Canada supported increased international civilian engagement at the district level, matched by clean performance by Afghan counterparts. Romania pointed out the need for Afghan officials to have more secure mobility to engage their local populations.

IRAN AND RUSSIA

¶13. (C/REL NATO) While Allies generally latched onto a regional approach targeted at Pakistan, several pointed the need to consider Afghanistan's other neighbors. Italy offered to use its G8 leadership role to encourage the tripartite process and influence Afghanistan's neighbors to

USNATO 00000131 005.2 OF 005

build regional stability. The Czech Republic, Germany, and France said NATO should involve Russia in Afghanistan beyond transit, and move away from "letting Moscow manage our relations with Central Asia." Turkey asked for parameters on engaging Iran. A number of Allies suggested roles to be played by Central Asian states. The Vice President said the U.S. would take a pragmatic approach to engage Iran, Russia, China, India, and transit countries, starting with the March 31 "big tent" Afghanistan meeting. He said it is possible to continue having a confrontational relationship with some of these nations on particular issues while still cooperating on shared interests in Afghanistan.

COUNTER-NARCOTICS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

¶14. (C/REL NATO) Denmark, the UK, and Albania named counter-narcotics as a priority issue. The Vice President asked Allies to avoid "waving constitutional issues on law enforcement vs. military activities as a fig leaf," but explore practical means to engage in comprehensive counter-narcotics activities within legal means. Biden thanked Permanent Representatives for refraining from mentioning President Karzai's brother Walid Karzai and his reputed connections to drug trafficking, pointing him out as an example of pervasive corruption. Estonian Ambassador Luik suggested that the international community could invigorate the private sector by setting up short amnesty programs for businesses to recapture "hidden money" legally in the licit local economy. The Vice President concluded that the international community must keep the pressure on the Afghan government to continue taking ownership of rampant corruption within its own institutions.

FRAMEWORK TO ASSIST SMALL ALLIES

¶15. (C/REL NATO) The Czech Ambassador said the U.S. review should consider presenting a framework that small nations lacking "enabling" overhead transport, logistics, and medical capabilities could use to better plug in their military commitments. He said a framework would help national decision makers to see what capacities could be linked with assets already in theater, exposing additional units that could therefore deploy.

LEVEL OF AMBITION AND POST-2010

¶16. (C/REL NATO) Germany, Bulgaria, Belgium, Estonia, and Hungary asked that the U.S. review help clarify a realistic level of ambition for Afghanistan and the performance of its democratic institutions. Hungary cautioned that Afghanistan

is developing a culture of dependence and aptitude for blame-shifting. The Netherlands Ambassador Schaper asked the Vice President how the international community should reevaluate its role after the Afghanistan Compact expires in 2010. Biden responded that he hoped a post-2010 evaluation would begin with a Dutch offer to stay.

VOLKER